



## ***South Shelby Middle School***

***District: Shelby County R-IV***

***Enrollment: 210***

***Grade Range: 6-8***



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*It is the mission of South Shelby Middle School to provide students with a quality, well-rounded education, in a safe and healthy environment and the opportunity to obtain skills, abilities, and attitudes to be life-long learners and productive citizens who can succeed in a changing, global society.*

South Shelby Middle School sits on the plains of rural northeast Missouri and serves students living in and around the small communities of Clarence and Shelbina. The school receives students from two elementary schools in the Shelby County R-IV district.

### ***Striving for a “Culture of Excellence”***

At South Shelby Middle School, excellence is simply the normal way of doing business. This culture of excellence is a result of systemic change through the vertical team concept. In 1996, South Shelby Middle School faculty and staff embarked upon what has become a seven year journey toward creating Mission and vision to guide their efforts. Under the guidance of Truman State University’s Professional Development Team and facilitated by a newly formed vertical team, South Shelby’s faculty and staff worked collaboratively to assess the school, analyze available data, and develop goals and action plans. Ultimately, the staff developed a vision statement that reflects collective commitments focused on student empowerment. The school also used Project ASSIST through the University of Missouri at Columbia for a systemic change model to drive its school improvement efforts.

A six-person School Improvement Team now guides the development and revision of building goals. These faculty members chair South Shelby’s vertical teams, now known as high performing collaborative teams. High performing collaborative teams meet on a monthly basis to evaluate student performance, develop common assessments, create and test new teaching methods, and determine action research projects. They have also developed monthly assessments that parallel the Missouri Assessment Program which help guide instruction and identify areas of need.

### ***“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”***

- ***Exit Exams*** – South Shelby Middle School has created exit exams for eighth grade students. Exams inform teachers as they work on integrating coursework across the curriculum.
- ***Student of the Month*** – A unique “Student of the Month” program offers selected students the opportunity to have \$20 donated in their name to a charity of their choice.
- ***Differentiated Contract Days*** – During summer months, South Shelby Middle School staff is invited to receive regular daily pay to participate in collaborative work concerning the building’s vision, mission, and goals. Time is voluntary, but over 95 percent of the staff participates.

## ***Creating Challenging Curriculum***

The curriculum at South Shelby Middle School empowers and challenges students to grow academically and personally, encompassing the following objectives:

- Basic Skills Development
- Learning in the Academic Disciplines
- Character Development and Ethical Judgment
- Preparation for Life in a Complex and Diverse Society
- Appreciation for Democratic Values
- Participation in the Practices of Democracy and Community Service
- Development of Interpersonal, Technological and Other Skills Valued in the Workplace

Across all areas, the curriculum flows from Missouri's Show-Me Standards. Teachers use a variety of student-centered, research-based strategies to keep students active and engaged in learning. Cooperative learning incorporating Socratic seminars, authentic projects, and investigation, is a primary instructional method. Technology enhances instruction across the curriculum. Teachers are equipped with digital cameras, scanners, SMART boards and projectors, and EMINTS classrooms allow sixth and seventh grade students to have computers on their desks. Career Awareness classes, job shadowing opportunities, and service learning projects demonstrate to students "real world" applications for their skills. For students who struggle academically, South Shelby Middle School provides a structured study hall and after school tutoring, as well as small group reading tutoring. Students who do not complete homework for the day attend a mandatory homework table after school.

A variety of extracurricular activities augment South Shelby Middle School's academic curriculum, encouraging students to pursue their personal interests. Students may participate in athletic activities including football, softball, basketball, cheerleading and track. Student Council is available to any student wishing to participate. Campus Bowl academic teams allow students who excel in class work to compete against students from other schools. Students in the sixth grade Science Club participate in activities such as "mystery night," in which they must solve a crime using fingerprints and clues. South Shelby's "no cut" policy encourages all students to participate in extracurricular activities.

### ***"WORDS OF WISDOM"***

- **"Professional development is the key to improvement of instruction and higher student achievement."**
- **"Our focus is no longer on what the students will be doing but on what we, together with the students, will be doing to meet our vision."**

## ***Demonstrating Excellence...Statewide and Nationwide***

As a result of its concentrated systemic change effort, the work of a dedicated staff, and student empowerment, South Shelby Middle School has been "Accredited with Distinction" in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003. In addition to receiving recognition for student achievement at the state level, South Shelby has also been recognized for excellence at the national level. Recently, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) selected South Shelby Middle School as one of the Nation's Top 100 Middle Schools. The school was subsequently selected from that group of 100 as one of six schools to be included as case studies in a book published by NASSP in February 2004. South Shelby frequently shares successes and best practices with other schools by hosting visiting schools and presenting at state and national conferences.

*South Shelby Middle School is a learning community in which structure and culture encourage and empower students to achieve excellence.*